

SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE

SUBURBAN FIRE DISTRICTS

Purpose

Severe weather events are challenging to the MetroSafe system as there is a surge in 911 calls and radio traffic associated with response to calls for service. The purpose of this procedure is to reduce the reliance upon dispatch personnel so they can process 911 calls as swiftly as practical. Additionally by utilization of fire department Tactical Channels, the main Operations Channels are not congested with insignificant radio traffic which could impede responder safety.

Severe Weather Warnings (Including Tornado Warnings):

Severe Weather WARNINGS (including Tornado Warnings) will be transmitted as soon as practical by initiating the All Firefighter tone activating all fire service pagers. The nature of the Severe Weather Warning shall be stated and that the Severe Weather Procedure is in effect.

If a Severe Thunderstorm Warning escalates into a tornado warning, MetroSafe shall broadcast the alert tone # 3 (weather tone) across FIRE ALL TALK GROUP (FIRE ATG) and announce the warning.

If a reliable source sights a tornado Radio will announce the location and possible direction of travel on the FIRE ALL TALK GROUP.

The FIRE ALL TALK GROUP is where the message is being broadcast simultaneously on all fire channels. The FIRE ALL TALK GROUP will be received by all radios that are on a fire channel. The FIRE ALL TALKGROUP will *not* be received if the radio is on other channels, such as MED, POLICE, EVENT, 8TAC/8CALL or the SIMPLEX frequency.

Implementation of Procedure:

MetroSafe shall have the discretion of implementing the Severe Weather Procedure. To implement the Severe Weather Procedure, MetroSafe shall activate the All Firefighter tone and state "The Severe Weather Procedure is now in effect." (This can be done as part of the severe weather warning as stated above).

General Concept of Operation:

The General Concept of this procedure is that assignment of units, tracking of assigned units and documentation of associated times related to calls for service occurring during a severe weather incident is handled by each fire department using their assigned tactical channel. There would be one operations channel assigned as the communications link between MetroSafe and the fire departments to inform departments of calls for service received by MetroSafe.

The only exception to this concept is that reports of structure fires are handled in the typical fashion. MetroSafe activates the fire department's pagers, assigns the department to an operations channel, tracks the responding units and monitors the assigned channel for responder safety purposes. For the meaning of this paragraph, a structure fire is where the caller states that flames or smoke is seen. Lightning strikes, trees falling on houses, fire alarms sounding should **NOT** be considered as structure fires.

Individual Department to establish a base operation:

During the Severe Weather Procedure, each fire department shall staff a Base Operation. MetroSafe will contact each fire department's Base Operation using FIRE 5 on calls for service that are NOT structure fires.

Each base operation shall be referred to as Department Name and Base.

Example: Pleasure Ridge Base, Middletown Base

Usage of Fire Operations Channels during Operation Weather:

FIRE 5:

- FIRE 5 will serve as the Coordination Channel for communications between MetroSafe and Fire Department Base Operations.

- Each department shall notify MetroSafe on FIRE 5 once their Base Operation has been established.

Example: "Pleasure Ridge Park Base is on the air."

- MetroSafe shall maintain a list of departments staffing base operations.

FIRE 6:

- FIRE 6 will be the *primary* Operations Channel for use on structure fires.

FIRE 7:

- FIRE 7 will be the *back-up* Operations Channel for structure fires (dependent upon MetroSafe staffing capabilities).

FIRE 8:

- FIRE 8 will be a *second back-up* Operations Channel for structure fires (dependent upon MetroSafe staffing capabilities).

MUTUAL AID 1 (MUTAID1)

- Mutual Aid 1 is to be used by fire department base operations or fire units on scene to request assistance or notification concerning external agencies such as LG&E or Public Works. (While for most storms MetroSafe will be the monitoring entity for this channel, depending upon the severity of the storm, monitoring could be transferred to the Emergency Operations Center or even LG&E).

DEPARTMENT TACTICAL CHANNEL:

- Each Fire Department shall switch their radios to their individually assigned Tactical Channel (FD TAC 11, FD TAC 12, etc.).
- The Department Tactical Channel shall be the primary Operations Channel for all calls for service that are NOT structure fires occurring within the department's jurisdiction.

Dispatching of Calls for Service:

Structure Fires

Upon the receipt of a structure fire, MetroSafe shall follow the normal dispatch procedure except that the warning tones are sounded just one (1) time. MetroSafe shall assign the incident to an available Operations Channel (FIRE 6, FIRE 7 or FIRE 8). If several structure fire incidents are in progress, the dispatcher may assign a second incident to a channel in use, being judicious in the assignment of the channel.

All radio traffic associated with the structure fire shall be conducted on the assigned Operations Channel, including any necessary calls to Radio, minimizing radio traffic wherever possible. When control of the structure fire has been gained, departments are encouraged to switch to their assigned tactical channel for the remainder of the incident.

A department's base operation shall be responsible for selecting the actual units to respond to a structure fire, and direct them to switch to the Operations Channel that MetroSafe has assigned to the incident.

There will be no automatic Mutual Aid dispatched while the Severe Weather procedure is implemented. Any requests for Mutual Aid shall be made on the assigned Operations Channel stating the specific type of equipment requested and from whom.

Example: 5501 to Radio start one engine from Buechel to 2801 Spring Bud Court

Calls for service that are NOT Structure Fires

Upon the receipt of a call for service that is NOT a structure fire, MetroSafe shall contact the appropriate fire department base on FIRE 5 (FIVE) giving the nature, location and box number of the incident.

Example: Radio to Pleasure Ridge Base, we have a (wire down/transformer fire/car fire) report at Dixie Highway and Greenwood Road box number 999.

The fire department's base operation shall be responsible for assigning the resource to respond to the call for service and to track the responding, on scene and clearing time.

All radio traffic associated with the call for service shall be conducted on the department's individual Tactical Channel.

If the fire department Base Operation does not answer, or is not yet online, the incident shall be dispatched as would a structure fire as described above.

Major Incident requiring MetroSafe Monitoring:

If a Major Incident such as a Level 3 Hazardous Materials Incident, special rescue team response, aircraft crash, etc., occur while the Severe Weather Procedure is in effect, the incident commander may request that the incident be assigned to an operations channel (FIRE 6, FIRE 7 or FIRE 8). The assigned will be secured for the incident and monitored by MetroSafe.

Emergency Operations Center Activation:

If the Louisville/Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency activates its Emergency Operations Center, the fire service representative at the EOC should monitor the assigned Operations Channel. Communications between a fire department base operation and the EOC should be done on the assigned Operations Channel.

Example: "Pleasure Ridge Base to EOC"

Resumption of Normal Dispatch Procedures:

MetroSafe will advise when Operation Weather has been terminated. At this point, MetroSafe shall activate the alert tone # 3 (weather tone) on all operations channels and state "Attention all departments, The Severe Weather Procedure has been terminated, normal operations will resume."

At some convenient time when the activity has diminished a department's base operation should telephone MetroSafe to exchange incident information, such as times and incident numbers.

While MetroSafe does not monitor individual department Tactical Channels, these channels are tape-recorded. Therefore if a department has the need to review the communications for an incident such as to determine missing times, the department can make arrangements with MetroSafe to review the recordings.